

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the Maine Department of Education will be collecting race and ethnicity identifications in a new way. This means that each school unit will change the way it asks for this information from parents, students, and staff.

Why is there a change?

- **Maine will be required to report to the US Department of Education using these new race and ethnicity codes beginning in 2010-2011.**
- **There are funding implications based on these identifications**
- **These new codes will be used by other federal agencies for reporting as well**
 - **Civil rights compliance**
 - **Health collections**
 - **Special Services collections**

This data will be used for informational purposes and will not be used against any individual. In addition, the Maine Department of Education will only report race and ethnicity data to the US Department of Education in summary form. It will never be reported on an individual basis.



23 State House Station
Cross Office Building – 5th Floor
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 624-6600 [v]
(207) 624-6700 [f]
1-888-577-6690 [TTY]
<http://www.maine.gov/education>



Reporting Race and Ethnicity

A Guide for School Staff



A Two-part Question

Ethnicity:
(required)

*Is the individual
Hispanic/Latino?*

- Yes
- No

Race:
(required)

*Is the individual from one or more of these
races?*

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White



School and unit staff ***should not tell*** an individual how to classify one's self. If asked, simply restate the question, explaining the definitions.

Race/Ethnicity Determination:
(optional)

- Parent Identified
- Self Identified
- Observer Identified
- Unknown

Definitions of ethnicity, race, and determination options can be found in the data standards at:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/medms/standards>

Important Notes

Individuals must always be encouraged to ***identify their own race and ethnicity.***

In the case of elementary and secondary students, ***self-identification includes the selection of race and ethnicity by a student's parents or guardians.*** If there is a conflict between the student's and parent's identification, use the parent's choices.

Even if the selected identifications do not seem appropriate, the school unit must accept the individual's self-identification of his or her race and ethnicity.

If a parent refuses to identify the race or ethnicity of a student, but the student later volunteers to self-identify, the data should be used, unless there is a reason to question the accuracy of the information.

In the absence of self-identification, ***observer identification*** should be used.

School unit policy and procedure should indicate the steps to be ***taken before an observer makes a selection.*** Units might consider including:

- A review of the enrollment form with the parent at registration
- Sending a second letter or making a phone call when identifications are not made
- Verification that the individual has either refused or has overlooked the question

It is generally good practice to ***identify one administrator to be the observer*** when selection on students' behalf is necessary. While this is not the only option that units may utilize, it is preferred because:

- It improves the consistency of the data collection process
- In the event that students, staff, or parents become dissatisfied with the observer process, the policy seats responsibility with one authoritative source

Visual identification is a difficult task, and observers should stay within their own comfort zones. There are other ways to identify, such as:

- Prior documentation to narrow possibilities
- Checking a sibling's re-identification
- Firsthand knowledge about the student or family
- The student's home language or parent's language preference
- Knowledge about the community to which the school belongs